

[Mrs. J. J. McCarthy]

[?]

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Bessie [Jollensten?] ADDRESS Ogallala, Nebr.

DATE Oct. 19, [1938?] SUBJECT A speech made by [J. ?. McCarthy at?] [?], Nebr.

1. Name and address of informant Mrs. J. J. McCarthy, Ogallala, Nebr.
2. Date and time of interview Oct. 12, 1938
3. Place of interview In her home in East Ogallala
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompany you
6. Description of room, house, [surroundings?], etc. In her modern front room of her home.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Bessie [Jollensten?] ADDRESS Ogallala, Nebr.

DATE Oct. 10, 1938 SUBJECT A speech made by J. J. McCarthy at [Kearney?]

Mr. Toastmaster and [Gentleman?]: "I feel that I only stand up here before you and [utter a?] silent prayer of thankfulness, for being permitted to be one of this splendid assemblage of Democrats, whose earnest faces make a more eloquent for the cause of Democracy, than any words that I can use.

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With greetings to this gathering my neighbors commissioned me to deliver to you a message as to the inequalities of Legislative Representation or apportionment in the western Nebraska Counties. (No One.)

The thirteenth Premier senatorial District of Nebraska comprises the counties of Dawson, Lincoln, Logan, Keith, Perkins, [Deuel?], Garden, Cheyenne, and the unorganized territory west of Blaine and Logan, one third of Nebraska and only one Senator a common occurrence during Legislative session sessions when the western Nebraska member, of either the house or Senate arose to address his fellow members he would be [?] recognized as the gentleman from the unorganized territory, still true today.

The Fourteenth district north of the thirteenth comprises the counties of Brown, Koyapatha, Cherry and Sheridan, Box Butte, [Dawes?] and Sioux and has only one senator [added?] to this the counties south of Lincoln and Perkins in the 29th District [Gosper?], Frontier, Hayes, and [Dundee?], here you have /# one half of Nebraska, Represented by three Senators, and it seldom happens that they are the kind that really represent their constituents, but we can /# see a change, the majority are Republican in name, but Democratic in their ideas, still year after year those people go on electing, to the house Seante Senate Politicans who in no wise represent them, but bearing the label Republican is all that is necessary to elect them. (in Nebraska)

The question suggests its self to you, if the people [west?] of here are as Democratic in their ideas as you or I am, Why is it that they do not elect men with similar ideas to executive, Legislative and [Juditial?] offices . My friend the age of the politician is not yet passed and [the?] old guard in the Republican party are not all dead yet by any means [?], and this old Guard are on to all the tricks of their trade, in getting nominated at the Primaries as well as under the old convention system, and once they are the [nominee?] of their party we all know from experience it is hard to pull men from their Idols. The party

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associations of a lifetime, the name Republican is as dear to my Republican neighbors as the name Democrat is to you or me.

In western Nebraska the past and it is to a great extent true today that we are only a missionary party, but our works are [bearing?] fruit, and as one that went through the mill, I will say that is as true as [?] in the political World as in the religious world, that the blood of the /# martyr is the seed of the church, (so western Nebraska Democrats that for over a quarter of a century, who have stood the hoots and jeers and derision of an opposition overwhelming in numbers and not always too choice of the manner in which they expressed their [?] feelings when flushed with victory. We stood it all, but it was not with Christian [fortitude?] (it was a case of where we could not [?] ourselves). Our ideas being the ideas of what a Government of equality before the law and justice equally administered to all alike as prevailed, in ideas all American in the truest sense of the word, all United all demanding just laws, and all believing in the unpublishing of their common heritage-this grand commonwealth—Nebraska.

For years we have appeared to our Fellow citizens of eastern and southeastern Nebraska, to give us something like a just apportionment in matters legislative, but our tears, and our prayers went unheeded. I never thought myself that it was the people of that section of the state that denied us that [boon?], but the politions and the interests, who have found out by experience that the [free son?] of the western prairies is a pretty tough proposition when it comes to [lassoeing?] him and tying him down.

Will we still be denied representation in our state legislature, when the [sensus?] just taken will [show?] that three senators represent a half million of the best people of the best state in the union of which I hope your city of Kearney will one day in the near future be the seat of our state government.

Now as to this apportionment proposition we are not so glamorous as we were in the past, not that our feelings have changed any as to the justice of our demands, but a new

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light has dawned upon us, the real true light that should burn incessantly not on hill tops but in /# the minds and hearts of men. That the real legislation, the only true legislation is that initiated and ultimately approved by the people themselves acting in their home [precincts?], in their polling booths as either the makers or repealers of laws, by use of the [referendum?] ballot, what difference does it make to us how few the number of the members of either house, when the citizen is acting in a legislative capacity, instead of 133 as at [precinct?] we could get along with 33 in both branches of the legislature and it would make but little difference what part of the state /# they come from, simplicity in laws and law-makng law-making is what appeals to democracy of western Nebraska so that in the not far off [distance?] future, from the Missouri river to the Wyoming line the talk of section or interest will no longer disturb [persuits?] of all our people.

For some years back the fusion of Democrats and Populists as the practice prevailed in Nebraska and more particularly in the western counties was ridiculed and derided by our Republican friends [as?] temporary expediency. This was a case of whose [ox?] was gored (it is possible they changed the name and called it [?] of interest or virtues in time of peril when the common regulars joined [tomany?] to save the common rules). Out our way we firmly believe in the expediency that will align all forces that believe in good government, that will harken to the demands of the people and grant them the reforms they desire, to be expedient is to [accede?] to the popular demands, when the party fails to do this their usefulness as a political organization as far as serving the people is at an end. [Democracy?] has in a quarter of a century that I have been with it and a part of it in western Nebraska has gone through three periods of political life. Up to 1894 we had a party organization of select men, selected by the people; (not on your life). No, they were selected in each county seat by the corporations, who owned and governed Nebraska as [autocratical?] [autocratically?] as the prince of [Monaco?] governs his little realm.

I can picture this at a moment the great Democratic convention of 1894 at the old coliseum in Omaha, of which your distinguished townsman and my respected friend Judge Oldham was chairman; right now I can hear the Hallelluiahs of the assembled and I may say (but

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I hate to have to use the word in this connection) Emancipated Democrats; as Honorable C. J. Smyth chairman of the committee on resolutions commended reading the preamble, "Democrats of Nebraska at last in convention assembled" Oh how I wish I had back the youth and the enthusiasm I felt that night as after the [roll?] call of Counties of W. J. Bryan was nominated for U. S. Senator, I jumped on a chair and ask that by a rising vote the nomination be made unanimous, how the people yelled, how the packed galleries applauded, it cheers an old man now to think about it, for the next decade we were fused or merged (out where I live we absorbed altogether) by that great educator of the greatest political movement of the age, the Peoples independent party, through it and from it we received a purifying, that has made the democracy of Nebraska the beacon light of this nation.

Our third party period, is what we are today a virile aggressive force backed by the best thought of the state, shall we by any acts of folly or [recklessness?] descend from our pedestal of public favor and esteem, say No, my friends each and all of you say it.

It is an undying [tenet?] of our faith that each Democrat can speak right out in meeting this independence of thought and action has prompted the slurs by those who wish us anything but well, of disunited, disorganized, rabble factions, but as Democrats who are one in name, and in fame, each /# can have his say and feel the better toward this fellow Democrat, and his fellow Democrat feel all the better toward him, for having unburdened his mind. The Democrats of western Nebraska will stand for no retrograde, movement, possibly the attitude has something to do with it; but now another word suggests its self, from a little circumstance, that happened to me several years ago; happening to me several years ago; happening to be at the silver lake mine, on top of the San Juan range of the Rockies in Colorado 14,000 ft above sea level. My business kept me there over night, so I went to the bunkhouse, where miners muckers and trammers were congregated around an emence red hot stove, which /# felt good when the snow was deep all around the mountain tops.

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As I stopped [?] at the door an old /# Leadville acquaintance, Peter [Cannon?] cried out "Hello, McCarthy what the devil are you doing up here in this high multitude", that are heart and soul with us for progressive legislation those people want us to go forward, those people believe in our leadership of the past fifteen years and want us to continue it if they join forces with us. Principles are alright my friends and men can fight and die for them but for real leadership we must have a man who in whom the real principle is [embodied?]. Us follows west of the 100 [meridian?] are going to stay with Bryan.

But in this forward movement we are handicapped in all the counties that I have named for want of Democratic paper, that would have a general circulation through those western counties. I know of western Nebraska Democrats who would gladly take stock in such an enterprise should they only be able to find a man that they could have confidence in and have such /# ability as this enterprise demands, an other little matter that hurts in most of our western counties is the dearth of News Paper correspondents of the [right / # king?], it is a fact that some of our largest county seats, have as correspondents, for Democratic news paper fellows that would not if they could tell the truth about a Democrat, or a Democratic gathering, none of them have in any no way injured myself so that I am in any way grouchy but my belief is that the correspondence of Democratic newspapers should at least give the news [as?] to the doings of Democratic especially when their acts call for commendation.

The immensity of our western prairie makes thinkers rather than speakers out of men, a western Nebraska Nebraskan may be described as follows: The fragrant sword sward it is his shrine; His temple Lord this vault of thine; His [consored?] breath, the mountain air, A silent thought, his most frequent prayer.